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KER'S EDITION
OF PLAYS

UNCLE SI.

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UNCLE SI

A Comedy in Four Acts

Originally produced at Stone's Opera House, Binghamton, N. Y., Oct. 4, 1898, under the title of "Paradise Regained."

By Frederick H. Wilson

BOSTON
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1900

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CHARACTERS

As originally produced by the Frederick H. Wilson Company, under the management of Harry C. Curtis

Josiah Hedges, ("Uncle Si,")	Frederick H. Wilson.
Frank Rolleston,	Wilfred V. Lucas.
Ned Clearfield,	Robert H. Harris.
Prof. Philander Ticklepitcher,	Stuart Anderson.
Rev. John Rolleston,	Will Chatterton.
O'Flannigan,	R. A. Furness.
Weary Wiggles,	Will R. Clarke.
Rachel Watterson,	Annie C. Hertz.
Nellie Parkman,	Jeanette Carew.
Tranquillity Hedges,	Jeanette Howell.
Ruth Hedges, afterward known as Lucille Askman,	Minxie A. Barrie.

Time, the present. Costumes modern.
Time in representation, two hours and a half.

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PROPERTY PLOT

ACT I.

Two rustic benches. An apple and a half apple. Two sketch books. Clothes-line. Clothes to hang on line. Wheelbarrow. Tripod and kettle. Tinware. Small paper bag filled with flour. Snake and cow bell. Novel and lead pencil. Man's bicycle. Pipe and tobacco. Flour barrel with both ends out. Three letters.

ACT II.

Piece of harness. Fence and hen-coop. Rake and pitch-fork. Fork full of hay. Very large pancake. Saw-horse and saw. Stick of wood. Three steel bars. Wash basin and towel. Pan or pail of corn. Broom and tin pail. Letter for Frank.

ACT III.

Easel and picture. Palette. Brush and cane furniture. Sleigh bells and sofa pillow. Large parlor lamp, to be lighted. Snow. Nice pipe, not to be lighted. Calling cards. Fireplace.

ACT IV.

Fancy furniture. Decanter. Three wine glasses. Three bananas.

JOSIAH (*outside* R. U. E.). Go along there, Mooly; what's the matter with ye?

RACHEL (*going up to* R. U. E.). That sounds like Mr. Hedges' voice. He is the best sample of rural simplicity, goodness and honesty, I have ever seen.

NELLIE. He is the dearest old man living.

JOSIAH (*enters* R. U. E. *over bridge, down the return piece*). Morning, folks, how be ye all. (*All greet him ad. lib.*) I was takin' one of the cows through the lane, and I thought I'd drop in on ye.

NED. We are always glad to see you, Mr. Hedges.

JOSIAH. Jest so. Have an apple, miss? (*To* RACHEL.) There's one for you, sonny. (*To* NED.) And here is a big one for you, sis. (*To* NELLIE.) They ain't quite ripe yet, and if any o' you folks have got store teeth, ye'll have to be pooty careful.

OMNES. Oh, thank you, Mr. Hedges.

JOSIAH. Don't mention it. Ye hain't seen my old woman up this way, have ye?

RACHEL. No, Mr. Hedges.

JOSIAH. I hired a new hand t'other day, and it takes Tranquillity about all her time looking after him. She sent him up here just after dinner to open the meadow bars, so that the sheep could git up to the hill pasture. He ain't back yet. Say, have another apple. (*To* RACHEL.) Paintin', ain't ye? My stars, you city folks have fun, don't ye?

NELLIE. Did you ever go to the city, Mr. Hedges?

JOSIAH. I went once. (*Crosses to* NED; RACHEL *goes up stage to* R. U. E., *and starts sketching.*) Hezekiah Allen and me, we was in Bosting four days, a gallavantin' around; took a ride in the street cars, went to the town hall to see a troupe cut up. We seen Bunker's Hill, visited the lock-up, sot down on a seat in the Common, went to the Salvation Army, bought four chances on a gold watch, and wound up by getting chuck full of apple jack. Hezekiah's fust wife was a relative of the Scraggs,—old Bill Scraggs, he fit in the war. His boy Sem went west to Californy; some folks say he died there. Found out later he did die; he was buried in Mr. Potter's field. Hezekiah and me come home from Bosting, took off our dude clothes and went to hoein' pertaters. We ain't been to the city sence.

NED (*coming down* C.). How would you like to engage my services as a farm hand?

JOSIAH. Git out! The cows would eat you up for green grass. (*All laugh.*)

NED. Oh, I think I could learn to handle the hoe.

JOSIAH. Handlin' the hoe ain't all there is to a farmer's life. You city folks housed up all day in your stores and offices don't know nothin' about readin' God's book of nature. In the growin' of grass and garden truck from day to day, we can study life in its onward march; in the smell of the flowers we can see the handiwork of the Creator. No, no, sonny. I guess I could do the agreeable in a parlor, and measure off ribbon behind a counter, a mighty sight easier than you could work on a farm.

RACHEL. Mr. Clearfield, that ends your aspirations.

NED. I believe you. (NED *and* RACHEL *retire up* L. U. E.)

NELLIE. Do you ever take summer boarders, Mr. Hedges?

JOSIAH. Well, I hain't made a practice of it. Ye see, ma and Ruth, it takes about all their time to do the chores on the farm. What are ye doin',—readin'?

NELLIE. Yes, I have the latest novel.

JOSIAH. We—we got a book up there to the house; I'll lend it to you if you will take good care of it. Ruth read it most through. It's named "Robinson Crusoe." Ever read it?

NELLIE. Never did. (*Laughing.*) Let me read you a few lines from this book. It is called, "Alice, where art thou?"

JOSIAH. It ain't Grunes's gal, Alice, is it?

NELLIE. Well, hardly.

JOSIAH. I was going to say, she's over to Bill Morton's, helpin' Tom shear sheep.

NELLIE (*reads*). "Harold de Vere, after a moment's hesitation, essayed forth upon an errand that was destined to be productive of good fruit."

JOSIAH. It's been a great season for fruit; have another apple?

NELLIE. No, thank you. (*Reads.*) "Little did he know the good fortune in store for him. Giving a hasty glance at Owen Potter to see ——"

JOSIAH. Owen Potter! I allow he's the one that owns the field where they buried Lem Scraggs.

NELLIE. "To see if his actions were observed, he mounted his steed and galloped swiftly away across the Baldwin."

JOSIAH. I crossed the Baldwin one time with a Gravenstein, and the darn thing turned out to be crab apples.

NELLIE. "Faster and faster he flew; he knew only too well the loving hearts that were waiting him. Visions of a beautiful face ——"

O'FLANNIGAN (*enters*, R. U. E., *on bridge*). Supper is waiting for you, sor. [*Exit*, L., *over bridge.*

RACHEL. For the land's sake! what's that?

JOSIAH. That's Flannigan.

RACHEL (*looks* R.). I think I see your wife coming down the lane.

JOSIAH. I guess I'd better be trotting along; she has a way of speakin' her mind that's—well, it's to the point.

TRANQUILLITY (*off* R.). Josiah Hedges?

JOSIAH. I'm comin', ma—just as fast as I kin. (*To* NELLIE.) If the old woman ketches me a talking to you, she'll pull me over the coals. (*Starts up.*) Don't forget now, folks; come over to the farm. Here's a big apple for you, sis. (*Throws one to* RACHEL.) Come over to-morrow, if ye kin; we're goin' to churn, and I'll give ye some prime buttermilk.

OMNES. We will.

TRANQUILLITY (*outside*). Josiah!

JOSIAH. I'm a comin', ma. [*Exit over bridge* R.

NED. What an innocent old chap he is!

NELLIE (*goes up* R.). Dear, oh, dear! I wonder where Frank can be?

NED. The last time I saw him he was sitting on a fence writing a love letter.

NELLIE. A love letter? A man can't write a love letter unless he's in love, and he can't be in love unless he has some one to fall in love with.

NED. I guess he's found the "some one."

RACHEL. In the name of all that's good and great, who can she be?

NED. She is no less a person than the daughter of our worthy friend who has just left us.

RACHEL *and* NELLIE. What?

NED. Fact.

NELLIE. You don't mean to tell me that my cousin would so far forget himself as to ——

NED. Why he's head over ears in love. I saw him fixing the pole for her clothes the other day, and that's a sure symptom.

PROFESSOR (*outside* L. U. E.). Snakes! Snakes! Snakes!

(*All run up stage* L. PROF. TICKLEPITCHER *runs on* L. U. E., *gesticulating wildly, ad. lib. He pulls snake out of his pants' legs. Ladies scream. The men kill it by stepping on it, etc.* PROF. *throws it off* L. 2 E.)

NED. Why, if it isn't my old friend, Philander Ticklepitcher.

PROF. I'm his remains.

NED. What in the dickens brings you here?

PROF. Snakes! (*Ladies scream.*) Well, to tell the truth, I don't know. I was sauntering through yonder field, when I espied a quadruped of the bovine species. I sallied toward her, when a cow of the William persuasion bore down upon me. On I sped, as upon the wings of the wind. Finally we met. I have frequently been upon the horns of a dilemma, but never before upon the horns of a bu—bu—a William Cow. I came to terra firma after a short aërial voyage, and landed upon the tail end of a snake, who immediately coiled himself about my limb. The rest you know. It may only have been a garter snake, but I want no more garters like that one in mine.

RACHEL. Are you sure that snake is dead?

PROF. The part that I hit is. (*Glancing* R.) Say, Clearfield, I feel rather awkward; can't you introduce me?

NED. Why certainly. Miss Parkman, permit me to present to you my old friend, Prof. Philander Ticklepitcher. (*Both bow.*)

PROF. How do you do?

NED. This is Miss Watterson, of Philadelphia.

PROF. Yours truly and duly. (*Bow.*)

RACHEL. Charmed to meet you, sir. Permit me to inquire if you were at all injured by the ——

PROF. Snake? Not in the least, although we were for a moment locked in a fond embrace. (*Looking around.*) Summering, eh! Delightful locality. Charming. The aroma exuding from the pansies, heliotropes and daisies permeates the entire atmosphere.

NELLIE. I see that you are an enthusiast on the subject of nature.

PROF. Of a verity I am. I subsist upon nature. I adore the inanimate. I love the inanimate. The sagacious equine, the domestic canine, the purring feline—and above everything else—— (*Sniffs.*) Preparations for eating?

NED. Yes, we dine regularly at the Hotel de Green Mountain.

PROF. I have been dining very irregularly at the Hotel de "Few-and-far-between."

NED. Well, professor, you are welcome to the commissary department.

PROF. Ah, you have sounded the death knell of my hungry propensities. On the wings of the wind I fly. Ladies, until after the pancakes (*bow*), adieu. [*Exit*, R. 3 E.

NELLIE. Ned, where did you resurrect that?

NED. He is an old friend of mine.

NELLIE. He looks like a very old friend.

RACHEL. Well, folks. (*Rises.*) I guess I will go down to the brook and wash my hands before supper. (*Goes* L.) Are you coming, Nell? [*Exit*, L. 1 E.

NELLIE. Presently. [*Exit*, L. U. E.

NED (*goes* R.). It would be a singular circumstance if I could strike up a flirtation between the eccentric Ticklepitcher and the old maidish Rachel. By Jove, the game, as far as a joke is concerned, is worth the powder. (*Looks* R.) I wonder if he will eat up everything in the larder. If my memory serves me, there are three events in his daily life—breakfast, dinner and supper.

NELLIE (*enters* L. 2 E.). Come on, Ned. (*Tragically.*) This way to the ablution department.

NED. Ha, ha! Lead on, fair maid, I scent the conflict from afar. Fame blows her trumpet—— (*Tin whistle blows.*) Well, if that is fame's trumpet, she blows it mighty few.

[*Both exeunt*, L. 1 E.

(*Noise outside*, R. TRAMP *enters with a wheelbarrow load of cooking utensils, followed by* PROF. TRAMP *grabs* PROF. *and throws him* C., *breaks bag of flour in his face, and exits with wheelbarrow*, L. 3 E.)

PROF. Well, I'll be blowed. (*Blows flour.*) Nature, thou art a beautiful garden in which I am only a little flower. (*Blows flour.*) Of a verity, I think the evening meal will be postponed. The genus hobo has captured the supplies, and the inner man must dine once more at the Hotel de Few-and-far-between. (*Looks* L.) I think I see the denizens of this camping outfit yonder. I had better inform them that Gen. Coxey has been here with his entire army. (*Rises.*) I am coming, folks. The flower of the hobo army is coming.

[*Exit*, L. 1 E.

FRANK *enters*, R. U. E., *on bicycle.*

FRANK. Hello! Hello! everybody. Where are you? I guess the fort is deserted. (*Laugh outside* L.) Hello—there they are. (*Looks* L.) There seems to be a stranger in camp. They all seem to be enjoying themselves. They are fortunate, I can't find any amusement to-day. Sketching is a bore, hunting too fatiguing, and fishing is played out—I am tired of company, and yet there is one exception. Ruth, the old farmer's daughter—what a misfortune it is that fate cast her lot among the buttercups and daisies. By Jove, if she were educated, she would make a wife fit for a king.

RUTH (*outside* R. U. E.). Dad! Oh, dad!

FRANK (*going up* L.). There she comes now, looking as beautiful as a lily of the valley. (*Comes* R.)

RUTH (*enters over bridge* R., *with milking pails; she comes down return piece to* C., *and sets pails down*). Phew! But I'm tired out.

FRANK. How do you do, Ruth? Been milking?

RUTH. Yes. I milked three. The other two cows is farrow.

FRANK. Hadn't you better rest? (*Picks up sketch book.*)

RUTH. Where be everybody?

FRANK. Down to the brook, I guess.

RUTH. I guess I'd better scoot, then. (*Starts.*)

FRANK. Why you've only just come.

RUTH. I know that, but it ain't proper, 'cause you be here all alone. Ma says it ain't.

FRANK. Yes, but your mother is not here.

RUTH. That's just what's the matter with Hannah. If I ain't home with them milk pails, ma'll soon be here.

FRANK. What makes you act and talk so strangely when I meet you?

RUTH. I dunno. Ma says we've got to look out for you fellers from town; you're all the time talkin' tom foolery to us country gals.

FRANK. Oh go on, come over here and sit down.

RUTH. I don't want to. Is that your sister that's campin' out here. (FRANK *sits down on bench* R.)

FRANK. No, it's my cousin. Come and sit down.

RUTH. I don't want to. How old is she?

FRANK. She's over seven. Come and sit down.

RUTH. I don't want to. (*Coming nearer.*) Can she milk cows?

FRANK. That is one accomplishment she lacks. Come and sit down.

RUTH. I don't want to. (*Comes nearer.*) If she wanted to, I could learn her.

FRANK. I'll speak to her about it. Come and sit down.

RUTH. Will you promise not to talk strange like you did t'other day?

FRANK. If you insist. Come and sit down.

RUTH. I won't sit down there, I'll sit down here. (*Sits on stage beside him.*)

FRANK. Would you like to look at some of my etchings?

RUTH. Your what?

FRANK. My etchings.

RUTH. Do you itch?

FRANK. No—no—my drawings, I mean.

RUTH. Oh yes, please. (*He hands her some drawings.*)

FRANK. That's Herculaneum and Pompeii.

RUTH. Who?

FRANK. Herculaneum and Pompeii.

RUTH. Oh!

FRANK. That is Cleopatra's needle.

RUTH. I'd hate to sew with that needle.

FRANK. That is Washington crossing the Delaware.

RUTH. Oh! (*Looks over the pictures; business.*) Oh—h—h—! Hadn't you ought to be ashamed?

FRANK. Why—what's the matter?

RUTH. That woman's dress has all fell off her up here. (*Points to bosom.*)

FRANK. Oh, no—that is what we call a décolletté costume.

RUTH. Call what?

FRANK. Décolletté. Evening dress.

RUTH. Oh, say, what's that long piece what hangs on behind her dress?

FRANK. That's her train.

RUTH. Her what?

FRANK. Her train.

RUTH. Oh! (*Bus.*) Oh, say! That long piece on behind is what fell off of her up here, ain't it?

FRANK. Perhaps. Say, Ruth, do you know what love is?

RUTH. Yes. Lies you fellers tell us gals.

FRANK. No, no. I mean do you know what a bonafide lover is?

RUTH. A what?

FRANK. A bonafide lover—a true lover.

RUTH. Oh, a dead sure enough lover? Oh, yes. He's one that takes you to apple parin's and corn huskin's and singin' school, and does all the chores and everything you wanted him to do.

FRANK. Yes.

RUTH. Say, Mr. Rolleston. If I had a lover, he'd carry that milk home and skim it, wouldn't he?

FRANK. Of course.

RUTH. Gosh! I wish I had two or three.

FRANK. Say, Ruth, tell me something about your home life.

RUTH. You mean about our folks to home? Well, first of all there is dad.

FRANK. Dad? I wouldn't say dad; it is so uncouth. Say father.

RUTH. Say which?

FRANK. Father.

RUTH. Father for my old dad? That sounds almost too dudefied for him. Well, first of all there is dad. I mean—what did you say his name was?

FRANK. Father.

RUTH. F—father, and ma, and me, and Jack. Dad—I mean father—he does the hayin' and tends to the stock; and then we've got an Irishman named Flannigan—he helps dad—I mean father. I keep forgittin', don't I?

FRANK. I should say you did.

RUTH. I used to go to school some, but I don't get to go much now.

FRANK. I suppose your work keeps you tied pretty closely at home.

RUTH. No, my ma keeps me tied to home. She's teachin' me how to darn socks now. I darned two pair of dad's—I mean father's—t'other night, and after I'd got 'em darned he darned me for darnin' them. Say, Mr. Rolleston, my ma taught me how to do croquet work.

FRANK. How to do what?

RUTH. Croquet work.

FRANK (*laughs*). Oh, you mean crochet work.

RUTH. Aha! Say, Mr. Rolleston, why don't you come down here and live in the country?

FRANK. I might some day.

RUTH. Just think the lovely air and fallin' dew——

FRANK. We have lovely airs in the city—from the Italian Operas; and in regard to the falling dew—we have all kind of things fall due in the city.

RUTH. If you lived here you would rise with the larks.

FRANK. I've been up on one all night. Ruth, your beauty, your simplicity of manner, your freedom from all guile, has created in my bosom a feeling I thought impossible to entertain.

RUTH. Get off my frock.

FRANK. Never mind your frock; let me read to you a life picture.

PROF. (*enters*, L. U. E., *down* L). The fair one with the golden locks said she left her parasol hereabouts. I will explore. (*Sees* RUTH *and* FRANK.) Don't mind me—I've got the same disease myself. [*Exit*, L. 1 E.

RUTH. Is he your brother?

FRANK. Well, I should hope not. My brother is the pretty little boy with the blue eyes.

RUTH. Say, I like him.

FRANK (*arm about her waist*). Do you like him better than you do me?

RUTH. Say, if you don't take your arm away, I'll holler.

FRANK. Oh, don't. Most girls like to have an arm around their waist.

RUTH. Do they? So do I, Mr. Rolleston. (*Slipping away from him.*) What makes you act so strange to me?

FRANK. It is because I love you.

RUTH. This milk needs straining. (*Starts for pails.*)

FRANK. Never mind the milk, Ruth. I'll speak in a language you cannot misunderstand. With all the fervor of my nature I love you.

RUTH. I don't think I know what you mean. Be ye a poppin'?

FRANK. Tell me, Ruth, do you love any one else?

RUTH. None that I know of just now.

FRANK. Then let me seal my affection with a kiss.

RUTH (*business*). No, sir-ree Bobby, not by a jug full. You've got to wait till I say yes, before you can cut up any shines like that. (*Laugh outside.*) Oh, here comes the campers out. 'Twon't do to see me—my cheeks is burning like fire. Say, Mr. Rolleston, what is your front name?

FRANK. Francis, although at school, they called me Frank.

RUTH. Did they? Well then, Frankie, fetch along the milk.

FRANK. What? I? I never carried a pail of milk in all my life.

RUTH. Well, then, it's time you began. (*Laugh outside.*) Oh, I know you're skeered your friends will see you. (*Bus.*) If you are a good boy, I'll let you milk the cows to-morrow.

(FRANK *picks up pail, she all the time guying him. They exeunt* L. U. E. RACHEL, NED *and* NELLIE *enter* L. I E., *laughing immoderately.*)

RACHEL. I'll laugh over that for ten years to come.

NED. Poor Ticklepitcher! I don't think he knew the gun was loaded.

NELLIE (*looking off.*) Here he comes!

NED. Let's give three cheers for Philander Ticklepitcher, the champion wing shot of the Green Mountains. (*All cheer.*) Hip! Hip! Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

PROF. (*enters,* L. I E., *with gun and dead bird*). Ah, my friends, I see that you appreciate my keenness of vision.

RACHEL. I am glad to see that you are such a lover of sports.

PROF. There are other things I love still more.

RACHEL. Name one.

PROF. The pleasure of your charming society. (PROF. *bows.*)

RACHEL. Oh, don't mention it.

PROF. I won't. (*Aside.*) I wonder if she could support a husband.

NED. Now, professor, I think we can prevail upon you to remain and join the party. (*He protests; they coax him ad. lib., and he consents.*)

PROF. Ah, you have overwhelmed me by the weight of your entreaties. I will e'en condescend to remain.

NED. Think of the pantry full of eatables, and the ——

PROF. The pantry full of eatables! Why the tramp stole it all.

OMNES. What?

NED. A tramp? Well, here's a pretty "how do you do." Which way did he go?

PROF. I couldn't see very plainly. I was in the flower garden at the time. I think he went that way. (*Points* L.)

NED. I guess I'll go that way too. [*Exit,* L. U. E.

NELLIE. I guess I'll go that way three. [*Exit,* L. U. E.

PROF. I guess I'll go that way four. (*Starts* L.)

RACHEL. Ahem!

PROF. I have changed my mind; I stay right here with you.

RACHEL. I am so glad you have condescended to remain with us. Now if you had any other engagement ——

PROF. Speaking of engagements, were you ever engaged?

RACHEL. No. Were you?

PROF. Once.

RACHEL. Once?

PROF. Once. I will relate the circumstances. It was a lovely moonlight eve. I sat upon the sofa with Maria. I had my arm around her waist—(*bus.*) merely an illustration—when suddenly an unseen enemy approached me from behind. It was the father of the said Maria. I was ejected from the parlor sofa to the front door yard without a moment's warning.

RACHEL. You don't say so?

PROF. But I do say so. I had my grand revenge. I loaded my coat tail pockets full of scrap iron and shingle nails and went down to the house in question, as though I had enjoyed the performance of the evening before. I sat upon the same sofa with the same Maria. My arm was about her waist —(*bus.*) more illustrations. I was about to murmur the words, "wilt thou," when I felt a movement behind the sofa. Papa appears upon the scene. One kick from papa and the said papa was squirming outside in the front door yard with a severe case of club foot.

NELLIE (*runs on* L. U. E.). Mail! Mail! I've got a letter.

RACHEL (*rises*). One for me, Nellie? (*She gets a letter; both ladies go up stage reading letters.*)

PROF. She leaves me—she leaves me and my charming conversation for a paltry postal card. I wonder if I haven't a letter about me. I might as well be out of the world as out of the fashion. (*Finds letter.*) Ah! Here is one from my banker in Philadelphia. (*All run down and look over his shoulder; reads.*) "Prof. Philander Ticklepitcher. Will you please call and settle that ninety-seven cents wash bill?" (*All laugh.*)

NED (*outside*). Dinner.

PROF. And I am ready for dinner, Miss Watterson, if you are fond of turkey, take a wing. (*Offers her his arm and exit.*)

NELLIE. I guess I'll escort myself. [*Exit,* R. 3 E.

PROF. (*reënters*, R. 2 E.). Methinks that previous to taking my midday meal I will hie me to yon brooklet and partake of my annual bathlet. [*Exit*, L. 1 E.

NED (*enters*, L. U. E.). Well, folks, I captured the tramp. (*Looks around.*) I guess they have all gone to dinner. (*Enter* FRANK, L. U. E.) What's the matter with you, Frank? You've got a face on you as long as the moral law?

FRANK. I'm going to get married.

NED. No?

FRANK. Fact. Did you ever come in contact with an electric battery?

NED. Never did.

FRANK. Then permit me to give you a shock. The future Mrs. Rolleston is none other than the daughter of farmer Hedges.

NED. Ruth Hedges! I'm shocked; but don't impose upon me just because I can be imposed upon. Do you mean to say that Frank Rolleston—Sergeant Major of one of New York's crack volunteer companies, whose epaulettes have dazzled the eyes of many a fair one, and whose autograph has been sought after by the élite of Murray Hill, would come up here in Vermont and throw his fortune and his epaulettes at the feet of a woodland nymph? Common sense forbids.

FRANK. True, nevertheless. A month ago I would have scouted the idea. I tell you, Ned, she is a sunbeam through the clouds.

NED. Well, Frank, I'll be your best man, and in case you are suddenly taken ill, I'll even volunteer to take your place.

FRANK. Much obliged.

NED. Come in and have dinner. (*Goes* L.) Don't forget, Frank, the bottom layer of the wedding cake belongs to me. [*Exit*, L. 1 E.

JOSIAH (R. U. E., *outside*). Ruth! Oh, Ruth! (*Enters on bridge.*) Ruth Melinda Sophonisba Hedges! where be ye? (*Crosses from bridge.*) That gal goes a gallavantin' around somewhere all day long, and don't do half her chores. (*Comes down return piece.*) Ruth! oh Ruth! (*Sees* FRANK.) Mornin', Mr. Rolleston, hain't seen nothin' of my Ruth hereabouts, have ye?

FRANK. Yes, she was here a few moments ago with her milking pails.

JOSIAH. I guess she's got to home by this time. You'll 'scuse me for interrupting on ye. (*Goes* R.) Nice weather, ain't it?

FRANK. Yes. Say, Mr. Hedges (*he turns*), could I see you for a few moments?

JOSIAH (*returns*). Wall, I hain't got nothin' very special on hand. But you'll have to do most of the talkin', 'cause I ain't much of a hand at conversationalizin'. (*Sits* R.) Now if you want to talk, you come round and tackle ma; she'll talk to you. (*Lights pipe.*) Now you can jist fire ahead and give us the perspectus.

FRANK. Mr. Hedges, I will no doubt surprise you by the tenor of my remarks.

JOSIAH. Well, arter hearin' ye sing tenor in meetin' yistiddy, I don't think ye kin.

FRANK. I mean—what I am about to say will no doubt surprise you.

JOSIAH. Ye hain't found out where the old speckled hen has hid her nest, have ye?

FRANK. No.

JOSIAH. Well, mayhap you've got wind of what prizes they are going to put up at the county fair.

FRANK. Hardly.

JOSIAH. Well, maybe you've been down to the town hall and heard tell about the polytical meetin'. Ye see there's some talk about puttin' me up for jestice of the peace on the know nothing ticket.

FRANK. You are wrong again, Mr. Hedges.

JOSIAH. Well, I'll gin it up. What's it about?

FRANK. It is about your Ruth.

JOSIAH. Ha, ha, ha! You're just like all the rest of the young folks around these diggin's. They all takes a fancy to my little gal.

FRANK. She has aroused a feeling in my heart that has lain dormant since my birth.

JOSIAH. She's cut up the same darn caper with all the rest of the young fellers. Now there's Eli Green and Seth Martin—— Say, ye hain't never met Seth nor Eli, have ye?

FRANK. Can't say that I ever did.

JOSIAH. Well, ye hain't missed much.

FRANK. To which one of these swains does she extend her preference?

JOSIAH. Come again.

FRANK. I mean which one does she like the better?

JOSIAH. Oh, Ruth? She don't care two straws for either one. Eli helps her in the chores, and Seth takes her home

now and again from singin' school; but what's all this got to do with me?

FRANK. Just this, Mr. Hedges. I love your daughter, and with your permission and her consent, I will make her my wife.

JOSIAH. Now ye stop right where ye be. Am I understandin' of ye correctly that ye want to marry my leetle Ruth?

FRANK. You are.

JOSIAH. Mr. Rolleston, my leetle gal has been reared in a different school from you.

FRANK. My love for her would soon transform her, and an education would fit her to grace the halls of society.

JOSIAH. And how about her teachin'? Ever since she was a little toddler she's been taught to know the right. She knows no wrong. I ain't much of a hand at talkin', but, Mr. Rolleston, you've sorter upset me. I've heern tell about the deceptions of young citified life, and I'm afraid of it. Surely a man like you, young, eddicated, and good lookin', ain't got no cause to go hungerin' for a woman to tie to. My little Ruth is all I've got on earth that I really care about. She's as pure a bein' as ever breathed the breath of life. I hain't a refusin' of you; I'm simply a warnin' ye. If you'll be a good husband to her and treat her right, she's yourn. But if ye mistreat her and wrong her, and don't stand by her when she needs yer comfort and love, I'll twist your head off your shoulders. (*Bus.*) You'll 'scuse me, Mr. Rolleston, for firin' up that way, but the fact of the matter is, I do so love my little Ruth that—gosh darn it! I couldn't help it. When I get excited I sometimes stutter, and when I stutter I don't mean more than half I say. Did I stutter that time?

FRANK I didn't hear you.

JOSIAH. Then I mean every darn word I said. [*Exit* R. U.E.

RUTH *enters* L. U. E.

RUTH. Dad! Oh, dad!

FRANK. Stay a moment, Ruth.

RUTH. Not now, Mr. Rolleston. Them pigs have ——

FRANK. Never mind the pigs—I have just spoken to your father, and he has given his consent ——

RUTH. To what?

FRANK. To our marriage. Ruth, I love you, and I want you to become my wife.

RUTH. Your wife? Yes, Frank, if you'll be good and kind to me, I'll be the best little wife in all the world to you.

(*They embrace* L. C. TRAMP *enters* L. 2 E. *with* TICKLEPITCHER'S *clothes in his hand. Hat on head.* TICKLEPITCHER *enters in a barrel* L. 2 E., *yelling for clothes.* RACHEL *and* NELLIE *appear on bridge* R. U. E. NED *appears* L. U. E. *General consternation as curtain descends.* RUTH *and* FRANK, C.; TRAMP, R.; PROF., R. C.; NED, L. U. E.; RACHEL *and* NELLIE *at back* R.)

ACT II.

SCENE.—*A farm yard; full stage. House* R. 2 E. *Barn* L. 2 E. *Open gateway in* C. *Fence from* R. 3 E. *to* L. 3 E. *Old chair near house. Bench with pan on near house. Towel on house. Hen coop near barn. Harness on fence. Hay fork and rake at back. Animal effects during act.*

FLANNIGAN (*discovered at rise, drinking from pail*). Well, begorra, it's mighty tough on a dacent man when he's obliged to drink such stuff as that. That's the worst of livin' so far from town. I'd just as lieve be dead and buried as to be livin' here. The divil a wan of me do I see from mornin' till night but ducks and hens and cows. It's a sorry day for me when I come to work on this farm. Well, I'm here for a while, and I'll make the best of it.

TRANQUILLITY (*enters* R. *from house*). Come, come now, bustle about. There's a thousand and one things to 'tend to. There is the chickens to feed, horses to water, cows to be driven to pasture, wood to saw and split, drain to be dug, field of meadow hay to be cocked up, and law knows what all; and there ye stand jist as though there wan't a thing to be done. My stars above! I never see sich a man as you be. Come now, fly around and bustle about. [*Exit in house.*

FLANNIGAN. Do you mind that? I think I'll like the place. If that woman was my wife I'd break her back fourteen times a day. (*Noise in house,* TRANQUILLITY *jawing someone.*) Do ye hear them? Fight, ye divils, ye, fight. Let me see, I have four weeks' work to do this afternoon. What will I do first? I think I'll milk the ducks.

[*Exit,* L. U. E., *calling out "Quack, quack, quack."*

TRAMP (*enters from* R. U. E.; *goes through gateway to house. Knocks.* TRANQUILLITY *appears*). If you please, ma'am, I am a poor man with a large family of children. They are starving, ma'am; all they have to eat is angel cake. Now if you have any cold pie ——

TRANQUILLITY. Pie? No, Sir-ree, I'll give you no pie. I have some bread here I want to get rid of, and if you will saw me a stick or two of wood, I'll give you a slice or two.

TRAMP. I ain't much of a hand at sawing wood; is it soft or hard?

TRANQUILLITY. Hard wood. (TRAMP *groans.*) I believe you're shiftless.

TRAMP. I'm pretty nigh shirtless; where's the wood?

TRANQUILLITY. Behind you.

TRAMP (*looks at it*). Could I have it brought nearer to me?

TRANQUILLITY. If you don't saw the wood in about two minutes, I'll set the dog on you.

TRAMP. I guess I'd better saw the wood. (*Business.*)

TRANQUILLITY. I guess ye better had. [*Exit in house.*

JOSIAH (*enters from barn with pitchfork*). Hello! what are ye doin' at that saw-horse?

TRAMP. I'm trying to make it go. Ye see, bein' at this time temporarily embarrassed, I'm obliged to go to work in order to eat.

JOSIAH. That's a good policy. Where do you come from?

TRAMP. From Massachusetts. My forefathers come over in the Mayflower and landed on Plymouth Rock—and I've been rocky ever sence.

JOSIAH. I want to know! Well, you don't seem to have got along very well.

TRAMP. Oh, I kinder creep along. Ye see, I git a pension that helps me a out a leetle.

JOSIAH. Was you in the war?

TRAMP. I was the cause of the war. Ye see, I went out from Indianny. I 'listed for the month, and reënlisted for two years. I would have fit the war out, but our colonel told me one day to strike for our country and home. I watched my chance and struck for home. Say, how do ye saw that wood? I ain't much of a hand at sawing wood.

JOSIAH. Well, I'll give ye a few pinters; you don't seem to have the hang of it. Time you've sawed as much wood as I have you'll know more about it. (*Business.*)

TRANQUILLITY (*opens door*). Well! I swan! (*Takes her husband by the ear.*) You get in that house! The idee of you encouraging that lazy good for nothing tramp. (*Pushing her husband in house; to* TRAMP.) Now you scatter!

TRAMP. I hate to leave good society, but ——

TRANQUILLITY. Git!

TRAMP. All right, ma'am. (*Goes* L. U. E.; *turns to her.*) Say, do you know what I think of you? You're the homeliest old chromo I ever see. [*Exit,* L. U. E.

(*She makes a break after him with broom and hits* FLANNIGAN *as he enters from barn.*)

FLANNIGAN. Much obliged, ma'am. [*Exit in barn.*

TRANQUILLITY. Well, I swan! I nearly killed the Irishman! Land sakes alive, there's nothing but trouble. Ruth a gitting married, Si a spillin' kerosene ile over his clean shirt, the bread not risin', tramp a pesterin' the life out of a body, and me not dressed for the weddin'. (*Calls.*) Here you, Flannigan. (*He enters from barn.*)

FLANNIGAN. Well, what the divil is the matter with you now?

TRANQUILLITY. Have ye got them cows driven to pasture yet?

FLANNIGAN. Not yet, ma'am.

TRANQUILLITY. Well, great Jerusha! what time of day do you expect to git things done?

FLANNIGAN. I dunno. When I find out, I will let you know.

TRANQUILLITY. Don't give me none of your sass.

FLANNIGAN. Oh, go fall down somewhere.

[*Exit in barn.*

TRANQUILLITY. You imperent critter. (*Gets broom and strikes* PROF. *as he enters from rear of barn.*) Great suffering snakes! Another tramp!

PROF. Entered for the sweepstakes. Madam, I am pleased to meet you. Your style of greeting is novel, but nevertheless breezy.

TRANQUILLITY. Where on earth did you come from?

PROF. You mean where on earth did I go to?

TRANQUILLITY. You must 'scuse me, sir, but really I didn't see you a-comin'.

PROF. Well, your aim was just as straight as though you had been looking.

TRANQUILLITY. Might I ask your business?

PROF. I have no business, ma'am. I have a profession. My mission upon earth is to build up the uncouth mind—to teach the young ideas how to shoot.

TRANQUILLITY. Shoot? Oh, I see; you're a-selling guns and gunpowder and ——

PROF. Ye Gods! I? Madam, you do not grasp. I am a scientist.

TRANQUILLITY. I want to know if ye be. We've got two of them Christian Scientists in our neighborhood. Samantha

Ann Higgins got cured of the brown chitis by one of them. Maria Rogers is thinking of joinin'.

PROF. I see you are still laboring under a delusion. I am a teacher.

TRANQUILLITY. Oh, I see. Are ye looking for a job teaching our school? Si, my old man, is one of the trustees. Elijah Hopkins is head trustee. They're paying the teacher they've got now eighty dollars a year, and he boards around among the taxpayers; stopped a month with us.

PROF. I am not looking for any opening for a pedagogue. (*She looked at her petticoat.*) I called to see Wm. Hedges.

TRANQUILLITY. My old man? Well, he's in the house. He's peelin' 'taters. Any particular business?

PROF. My call is of a friendly order.

TRANQUILLITY. Now you can't rope him into no friendly orders. He belongs to two of them now. Had to put a mortgage on the farm to pay off his dues.

TRAMP (*enters* L. U. E.). Say ma'am ——

TRANQUILLITY. Git! (*Very loud.*) Of all the persecuted (*exit in house*), down-trodden women on this earth, I'm the most to be pitied; tramps and bums and peddlers, book agents and agents for friendly orders, and law knows what all.

PROF. My friend, is that lady your mother? (TRAMP *gives a look of disgust and exit,* L. U. E.) When I reach my lodgings, I will make a note in my diary to this affect—"Beware of talkative women—they are dangerous."

JOSIAH (*enters from house*). Good-morning, neighbor.

PROF. Good-morning, friend Hedges. Beautiful day for the wedding, isn't it?

JOSIAH. Sorter.

PROF. I suppose the well-known saying will soon be exemplified,—two souls with but a single thought, two hearts that beat as one.

JOSIAH. I s'pose so. Say, professor, I most forgot to tell you, but ma just put me in mind of it,—that bugler alarm of yourn is a fust-class invention.

PROF. Your opinion coincides with the rest of mankind. But in what manner does my burglar alarm concern your esteemed spouse?

JOSIAH. My steam plows?

PROF. My modus operandi ——

JOSIAH. You have to give me a new deal, professor, I hain't got either ace, face, or trump.

PROF. I see that my diction is too opaque for the dominion of your Lilliputian comprehension; I will therefore be compelled to elucidate and clarify my harangue by the expurgation of all polysyllabic verbosity.

JOSIAH. I guess two doses of senna and salts would cure ye.

PROF. Wait a moment, friend Hedges. I mean to say, in what manner does my burglar alarm concern your wife?

JOSIAH. Oh! Have you been talking about ma all this time? Well, t'other night I was out a leetle late. I was down to the Town Hall to a pollytickle meetin'.

PROF. To a—what?

JOSIAH. To a pollytickle meetin'. Ye see, there's some talk about puttin' me up for justice of the peace on the —— ticket and I was a speachyfyin' to some of my constitutioneers. Wall, I got home about two o'clock in the mornin'. I found that ma had locked me out, and I started to crawl in the kitchen winder, when that darn bugler alarm of yourn went off in ma's room. When I got inside, I found ma a-flopping around on the floor like a pea on a hot shovel. She was scared most to death. Scared so she couldn't speak.

PROF. She must have been scared.

JOSIAH. Well, I was glad on it. I got a good night's rest that night anyhow. But say, professor, ye hain't had yer breakfast, have ye?

PROF. Not as yet, but I fain would chase the delusive phantom of hope.

JOSIAH. Jest so. You'd better have a leetle bite with us this mornin'.

PROF. Of a verity I will. If there is one thing more than another I do really adore, it is an impromptu menu.

JOSIAH. I don't know whether ma has any of them cooked or not.

PROF. I will e'en ascertain. [*Exit in house.*

JOSIAH. He's a darn smart cuss. He's slicker than a cup of custard.

RUTH (*enters from house*). Say, daddy, how do you like my dress?

JOSIAH. Say! say! You look jist slaptitudinous! My, my! You look like your ma did when we was fust married. She's changed since. Say, leetle gal, this is the last day we is goin' to have any leetle daughter to home. (*Cries.*) Mighty hard, Ruth, mighty hard.

RUTH. Now, you old granny you, don't you cry. Why don't you be brave like me? Don't you see how b-b-brave I be. (*Cries.*)

JOSIAH. Now don't you start blubberin', 'cause you're worse than I be. (*Embraces her; she breaks away.*)

RUTH. Look out, daddy, for my new duds.

JOSIAH. Gosh! I forgot them duds; must be keerful of the dress—it cost eight dozen eggs.

RUTH. Now, daddy, don't you get lonesome. I'll come over to the house every week and darn your socks for ye and sew buttons on your shirts, and I'll——

JOSIAH. Ruthie, ye needent mind. Frank will need ye to darn his now. And that reminds me—up in the city ye ought to have a pooty good chance to sell a pair now and again to some of Frank's chums. I'll allow ye two cents commission on a pair. Now, Ruthie, ye won't be ashamed of having your old dad call around and see ye once in a while, will ye?

RUTH. Why, no, daddy.

JOSIAH. And ye won't let none of them smart city fellers call me a rubber-neck, will ye?

RUTH. Not if I can help it, daddy.

JOSIAH. Say, Ruth, Professor Ticklepitcher was here a while ago, and I invited him in to have a bite to eat. Say, Ruth, he wanted to know if ma had any sloptitudinous slapjacks for breakfast. [*Exit in house.*

RUTH. My stars, I wish it was all over! I'm all of a tremble. It would be a funny thing if I fainted when I was gitting spliced. I wonder if city girls faint when they're spliced. Maria Rogers fainted once, and they poured a pail of water on her, and she came too pooty quick. Let me see if I know what to say. "Ruth Hedges, will you take this man, Frank Rolleston, to be your lawful husband until death us do part?" Of course I will. Now for the faint.

(*She faints;* PROF. *enters from house eating a pancake; he catches her on his right arm, puts her in chair and fans her with pancake.*)

PROF. If you are fond of fans, might I induce you to eat a piece of this one?

RUTH. Oh, professor, you are so funny.

PROF. Thanks. It runs in our family to be funny. Are you subject to fainting spells?

RUTH. Not exactly. Sometimes I have spasms.

PROF. Overcome by the prospective hymeneal event. I only hope it is not a leap in the dark you are taking. You no doubt will pardon me, an entire stranger, for venturing to make such a suggestion, but at any time in the future, should that future not prove as bright as you at present paint it, and you should feel that you needed a true friend, might I venture to remind you that you will ever find a true one in your present impecunious acquaintance, Prof. Philander Ticklepitcher?

RUTH. Oh, professor, you are too kind.

PROF. Yes, when I was born there were two of a kind—the other fellow died.

RUTH. Can you tell fortunes?

PROF. Well, I am credited with having the faculty of looking into the future with the same degree of clearness that others can look into the past. I am the seventh son, and my father was the seventh son of a son of a—seventh son of a seventh son. Permit me. (*Takes her hand.*) I see before me by this line a beautiful home—plenty of friends, who will treat you as an inferior for a time, but they will speedily warm toward you. This line indicates broken hearts. Ah, your marriage will be productive of children.

RUTH (*eagerly*). Boys or girls?

PROF. The signs are non-committal. Here is a veritable network of lines,—happiness, wealth, longevity, travel in foreign lands, social distinction—now comes a change. A woman appears on the scene—a woman with a sweet classical face ——

TRANQUILLITY (*stands in door of house*). Ruth, come in here and peel these pertaters. [*Exit in house.*

RUTH. 'Scuse me, Prof. Ticklepitcher. [*Exit in house.*

PROF. Oh, what a fall was there my countrymen! From the sublime to the ridiculous—from Luna to terra firma. (*Sits on bench underneath barn window;* FLANNIGAN *throws out a fork full of hay upon him.*) Halloa! up there!

FLANNIGAN (*appears at window*). Hey?

PROF. Thanks, I've just had some.

FLANNIGAN. Did I throw that hay on you?

PROF. I had the misfortune to be underneath it when it fell. It seems to me I have seen your face before.

FLANNIGAN. It's been there for thirty years.

PROF. Are you one of the attachés of this institution?

FLANNIGAN. What's that, sir?

PROF. Are you one of the menials?

FLANNIGAN. No, sir, I'm an A. P. A.

PROF. (*aside*). Remarkably smart fellow. What time do the marital festivities begin?

FLANNIGAN. Hey?

PROF. At what hour will these two souls be united in connubial bliss?

FLANNIGAN. We have supper, sir, sometimes after dinner.

PROF. Thanks. That is all the information I require. Good-morning.

FLANNIGAN. Mornin', sir. (*Closes window.*)

PROF. I will now hie me to the banqueting hall. The inner man cries out for food, and the outer man must learn to obey the commands of the inner man. [*Exit in house*, R.

FRANK (*enters* L. U. E., *reading letter*). "Dear Frank: the news of your betrothal has just reached me. Consternation gave way to sorrow when I saw by the tenor of your letter that your decision was final. The news has filled the hearts of your family and friends with unutterable regret, and we can only pray that some event may occur which will cause you to give heed to counsel more mature than yours. Your loving mother." (*Folds letter.*) Mother, the sweetest and dearest of beings, I had hoped that purity of soul, in your case, would break down the barriers of family prejudice. (*Wedding bells heard outside.*) My wedding bells! I can only hope their song of joy may never change to a knell of sorrow.

RUTH (*enters from house*). Hello, Frank! I'm so glad to see you.

FRANK. Are you?

RUTH. Why, Frank, what's the matter? Be you sorry we's going to get hitched?

FRANK. To get what?

RUTH. To get spliced—married?

FRANK. Why, certainly not.

RUTH. Then why don't you give me a good big hug, like you did yesterday? (*Hug.*) Say, Frank, you look scrumptious. How do I look?

FRANK. Very nicely; who made your trousseau?

RUTH. My what? Oh!

FRANK. Your wedding garments.

RUTH. Oh! Maria Rogers cut it, ma basted it, and I sewed it. How do you like it?

FRANK. Well, it seems ——

RUTH (*quickly*). What's the matter with the seams? Be they busted?

FRANK. No; I mean that it might be deemed by some people slightly in advance of the fashion plate.

RUTH. Say, Frank, when we get hitched—I mean married—we'll be made one, won't we?

FRANK. I suppose so.

RUTH. Who'll be the one—you or me?

FRANK. I'll let you be the one.

RUTH. Will you? I'm so glad. You'll go everywhere with me, won't you? (*Business.*) You'll let me learn how to play the pianny? (*Bus.*) And ride a bicycle? (*Bus.*) And you'll let me keep your pocketbook?

FRANK. I guess I will draw the line there.

RUTH. Say, Frank, hug me again. (*Bus.*)

JOSIAH (*enters from house*). Hi! Hi! there! What are you two children a doin' of? Frank, I'm a good mind to spank ye. Ruth Melinda, I'm ashamed on ye. Your ma and me was married a long time afore we cut up any sich monkey doodle shines. Say, Ruth, where is that air china collar button yer ma bought me?

RUTH. Now where on earth did I put that collar button? Oh, I know; it's in the tin teapot. I'll go upstairs and —— (*Starts* R.)

JOSIAH. Never mind. I'll find it. Say, Frank (*crosses to* R.), have I got on one of your undershirts? This thing ain't got no sleeves in it.

FRANK. Perhaps you have got on one of your wife's.

JOSIAH. Great Scott! [*Exit in house quick.*

RUTH. Say, Frank, have you got another hug left?

FRANK. Just one.

RUTH. That's the one I want. (*Hug;* FRANK *exit in house.*) Land sakes, I'm gitting nervouser and nervouser. Why, there's my little chickie, and she ain't had her breakfast yet. (*Bus. with gloves and skirt.*) Here, chick! chick!

REV. MR. ROLLESTON (*enters* L. U. E. *through gateway*). I presume I have been rightly directed. (*Sees* RUTH.) Ah, young lady.

RUTH. Yes, sir—chick! chick! (*Bus.*)

ROLLESTON. Is this the house of Mr. Josiah Hedges?

RUTH. No, sir, this is the hen house.

ROLLESTON. This (*points* R.) is the house to which I refer.

RUTH. Oh, yes, sir—chick! chick! chick!

ROLLESTON. Will he receive callers?

RUTH. I guess so—he's just putting on his shirt.

ROLLESTON. Do you know a young gentleman by the name of Frank Rolleston?

RUTH. Oh, yes, sir—chick! chick!

ROLLESTON. Have you ever seen the young lady whom he is about to marry?

RUTH. Oh, yes, sir—chick! chick!

ROLLESTON. Is she beautiful—I mean, in mind?

RUTH. I never saw her mind.

ROLLESTON. I am afraid she is coarse and ignorant.

RUTH. She's got a good pure heart, and that counts for something in this world.

ROLLESTON (*aside*). This marriage must be prevented.

RUTH. Be you some relative of Frank's?

ROLLESTON. I am his father.

RUTH. Jehosophat! (*Jumps up.*) I'll go and tell him. (*Crosses to* R.) He'll be tickled to death to see you. 'Scuse me, sir. [*Exit in house.*

ROLLESTON. I must endeavor to still my nerves. My love for my only son must be set aside. His future prospects must not be imperilled by a marriage from which nothing but unhappiness can ensue.

JOSIAH (*in house*). Ruth, who's asking for me? I ain't had time to shave yet. (*Enters; business.*) Was you a desiring to see me, sir?

ROLLESTON. You are Mr. Josiah Hedges, are you not?

JOSIAH. Lately elected justice of the peace. You're the new minister, I reckin; I'm one of the deacons and I ——

ROLLESTON. You are in the wrong. I understood there is to be a ceremony performed here to-day.

JOSIAH. A what-er-ker-mony?

ROLLESTON. A wedding.

JOSIAH. Yes, something or other of that sort is about to take place. Might I ask your name?

ROLLESTON. I am the Rev. John Rolleston.

JOSIAH. What? Frank's father? I'm agreebly s'prised. (*Shakes hands.*) Howdy. (*Goes to door.*) Ma, make another place at the table, and put on the yeller napkins. (*To* ROLLESTON.) Have you got a rig?

ROLLESTON. No, I came by train. Mr. Hedges—I presume by the name, you are the father of the young girl to

whom my son is betrothed. I must tell you, in all candor, that I must raise my voice in protest.

JOSIAH. Eh?

ROLLESTON. I must object to this marriage.

JOSIAH. Object to it?

ROLLESTON. My son has been reared in a different school from your daughter. He has grand opportunities awaiting him. He is heir to a large estate and a grand career is before him.

JOSIAH. And my leetle gal's father is a justice of the peace.

ROLLESTON. If this marriage takes place, my son, as soon as the glamour of love has faded, will stray from the pathway of right.

JOSIAH. Well, Ruth will yank him back again. Ye see she takes after her ma, and her ma is a yanker from yank town.

ROLLESTON. I do not wish to misjudge your motives. My cloth entitles me to the respect of all. I am a minister of the Gospel, yet I am capable of error. If there be any way in which this union can be avoided, if money will tempt you ——

JOSIAH. Stop right where ye be. You're a father—so be I. My child is jest as dear to me as yourn is to you. She may not be as eddicated, but she's as pure a bein' as ever God's sun shined on. Now I'm nothing but an old Vermont farmer —I ain't got no citified ways—I ain't rich—no, nor I ain't poor, but there ain't enough money in the whole of New York to tempt old Si. Hedges to sell the happiness of his leetle child. You'll 'scuse me if I spoke up too strong to ye, you bein' a preacher, but the fact of the matter is, there's a still small voice ——

TRANQUILLITY (*in house*). Josiah Hedge's be you a comin'?

JOSIAH. Mornin', sir. [*Exit in house.*

ROLLESTON. My position certainly is a false one. My heart prompts me to stifle worldly pride, and think only of the happiness of my son.

FRANK (*enters from house*). My father!

ROLLESTON. My son! (*Embrace.*) Frank, is it true that you are to be married?

FRANK. It is.

ROLLESTON. Are you aware of the prospects in store for you? Have you thought of the family history, unsullied by a single stain?

FRANK. I have thought of all.

ROLLESTON. Your mother has chosen a wife for you.

FRANK. I have chosen my own wife.

ROLLESTON. Your friends will ostracize you.

FRANK. I will then seek the society of my wife.

ROLLESTON. The money willed you by your grandparents reverts to charity if you marry against the wishes of your family.

FRANK. The love of one true, honest woman, atones for the loss of a thousand fortunes.

ROLLESTON. My son, you have been reared in the lap of luxury. A mother's watchful devotion and a father's solicitude have cleared the brambles from your pathway of life. Your home has been a Paradise in which you have reigned, a God. Let no shame tarnish the scutcheon, let no serpent enter the portals of that earthly paradise.

FRANK. Father, during my lifetime I have never disobeyed you. Reverence for you has ever been mingled with affection for my mother. You have been to me the dearest and best of parents, and I have tried to be a dutiful son. This, however, is a case where the happiness of a lifetime is involved; my honor is at stake, and that honor must stand unblemished before all the world. (*Enter* RUTH *from house* R.) Father, this is my promised bride, Miss Ruth Hedges.

ROLLESTON (*slightly amazed*). Have I heard aright? This is the one to whom you have plighted your troth?

RUTH. I'm goin' to be Frank's wife.

ROLLESTON. Do you love my son?

RUTH. Love him! Why, I think more of Frank than I do of my chickens.

ROLLESTON. Will you make him happy?

RUTH. I will try, sir. I know just what you are thinking about. I ain't eddicated and stylish like you'd want me to be, but I love him so dearly. (*Runs to him and kneels.*) Please don't take him away from me—please don't!

ROLLESTON (*after slight pause, hand on her head*). I hope I am making no mistake. Frank, my son, kneel before me. (FRANK *kneels.*) May the giver of all good, the searcher of all hearts, bless this union of souls and lives—may no dark cloud o'ershadow the horizon of their future. (*Wedding bells.*) Let the reverberation of those chimes awaken an answering echo within you, to forever obey the Divine mandates of the Master. In His name do I bless thee. Whom God hath joined let no man put asunder.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*The home of* FRANK ROLLESTON *near the* HEDGES' *farm. Fancy chamber in* 3; D. *in* F., L. *Sofa* L. C. *Fireplace* L. 2 E. *Easel with picture, near* R. 2 E. *Table at back near window in* R. *flat. Lights dim at rise.*

RUTH. (*discovered at rise sitting on the floor in front of fire, with her head on sofa; she sings a verse of "In the Gloaming." The lights gradually rise. She sits on sofa* L.). 'Tain't no use tryin', ever since Frank took to paintin' them air picters, I can't do nothin' with him, but I don't care—I know he loves me. (*Rises and crosses to* R.) I've got his coat and his paintin' things all ready, and dinner is almost ready too. I wish he'd let me cook for him, but he won't. He says that girls as marries city gents mustn't know how to cook or do anything but sit in the parlor and do the agreeable to the folks what calls. I don't do anything right nowadays. (*Looks* R.) Oh, there's his new picter he's a paintin'. I wonder if I could paint a picter. (*Gets brush and palette.*) I'm goin' to try. Jack will just be tickled to death when he sees what I've done. I'll paint a rainstorm on top of the mountain. (*Paints.*) Oh, that looks so nateral I'll have to put an umbreller over the picter. Oh my, the rain is all runnin' down the mountains. I'll have to put some frost on and freeze it up. (*Paints.*) Frank will be as mad as a wet hen when he comes and sees that. Perhaps he won't notice it. Somehow I don't seem to be able to please him any more. (*Crosses* L.)

FRANK (*enters* D. *in* F. L.). Phew! it's cold!

RUTH (*runs to him*). Is it cold, Frank? (*Helps him with overcoat.*) Let's skin a rabbit.

FRANK (*aside*). Skin a rabbit! More slang! (*Aloud.*) It's dreadfully cold walking up from the depot. A month ago I would not have minded it, but now ——

RUTH (*on sofa*). Frank, come here and sit down, and tell me what you've been a doin' of all day.

FRANK. "Been a doin' of all day!" Ruth, how often must I correct you? It seems as though you would never learn.

RUTH. Oh, yes, I will. Only the other day you said I was a doin' better continerally.

FRANK. Continually.

RUTH. Continerusly.

FRANK. Continually.

RUTH. Contin-o-wal-ly.

FRANK. That's perfectly correct.

RUTH. I thought I'd git it after a while. Say, Frank, did ye sell your picter?

FRANK. Picture.

RUTH. Picter.

FRANK. Picture—picture—picture.

RUTH. Picter—picter—picter.

FRANK. It's no use, Ruth, I am getting tired of correcting you. Go bring my colors, and I'll paint a while. (*Sits* R.)

RUTH. Afore supper, Frank?

FRANK. No—*be* fore supper.

RUTH. Very well then, *be* fore supper. [*Exit* R. U. E.

FRANK (*on chair near easel*). This is a humdrum sort of a life. Fight against it as I may, every day it becomes more irksome. I begin to think my mother was right; this is no congenial atmosphere for a man of the world. I cannot invite my friends to see me, because I am ashamed of my wife; but then again Ruth is a dear, submissive little creature. I ought to love her more, and I will.

RUTH (*enters* R. U. E.; *spits on palette and mixes colors*). Here's your colors, and I've got them all fixed up nicely for you.

FRANK (*takes palette*). Thanks. (*She sits on sofa* L.; *he sees the picture.*) That's some more of your fixing, I suppose. (*Business.*) I guess a little retouching will take that out. (*Works, whistling.*)

RUTH. Frank! Frank! (*Louder.*) Frank!! (*Very loud.*)

FRANK. Well—what's the matter?

RUTH. Do you love me?

FRANK. Love you, Ruth? (*Crosses to sofa.*) Who put that doubt in your head?

RUTH. It kinder popped in.

FRANK. Well, let it "kinder pop" out again.

RUTH. You ain't tired of correctin' me, be ye, Frank? There be such a load here on my heart. Sometimes I think you wish you hadn't married your poor ignorant country girl. But you don't, do you, Frank?

FRANK. Why no, little one. (*Kisses her.*) Now, don't have any more such foolish thoughts. (*Crosses to* R. *and resumes painting.*)

RUTH (*whistles; pounds the sofa pillow ad. lib.*). Frank—Frank! (*Loud.*) Frank!! (*Very loud.*)

FRANK. Well, what do you want now?

RUTH. Come over here and kiss me again.

FRANK (*crosses to* R.). Certainly, a dozen if you wish. (*Business.*)

RUTH. Frank, you haven't got to paint any more *afore* supper, have you?

FRANK. Just a few more touches. (*Knock outside.*) Come in! (*Enter* NED D. *in* F. L.) Great Scott! it's Ned!

NED. How are you, Frank? Hello! Ruth; you are looking as fresh as a daisy.

RUTH. Am I, Ned? (*Takes hold of his coat.*) Let's skin a rabbit. (*Pulls off his coat.*)

FRANK (*aside*). Skin a rabbit! (*Aloud.*) Where did you come from, Ned?

NED. From behind the desk. (*Sits on sofa with* RUTH.)

FRANK. In business?

NED. Yep. The governor opened his heart and took me into partnership.

FRANK. How do you like it?

NED. Can't complain of the business, but I don't like the confinement.

FLANNIGAN (*enters* D. *in* F. L.). Mr. Rolleston, your pigs is loose. [*Exit quickly; all jump up.*

FRANK. Oh, hang the pigs!

RUTH. Wait a minute, Flannigan, and I'll help you catch 'em. 'Scuse me, Mr. Clearfield, I'm goin' to chase the pigs. [*Exit* D. *in* F. L.

NED. Frank, what have you got to eat? I'm starving.

FRANK. Hogs.

NED. What?

FRANK. I beg your pardon—my mind at that moment was on ——

NED. Hogs. Say, Frank, how is married life?

FRANK. Not all that I could wish for. Ruth is as good a wife as any man could wish for, but—never mind that topic now. Tell me, Ned, how is the affair between my cousin Nellie and you progressing?

NED. Out of sight, we've been engaged twice.

FRANK. Twice?

NED. Twice.

FRANK. Well, how do you stand now?

NED. Just at present we are disengaged. (*Refers to book.*)

FRANK. Disengaged?

NED. You see she wants a chance to think it over, and has asked me to wait about five years.

FRANK. And you?

NED. I'm going to wait.

FRANK. Good. (*Laughing.*)

NED. How is the painting panning out, Frank?

FRANK (RUTH *enters* D. *in* F. L.). Not as well as I could wish. I long to go to Europe and study from the old masters. That seems to be my only love now. Ned, old boy, if you ever wish to engage in any great exploit, never marry.

NED. Why? Is your married life unhappy? Well, you know the old adage—as you make your bed ——

FRANK. There, now, don't moralize. If Ruth were only more refined—if she were only more of a lady. (RUTH *sighs and exit* R. U. E.) Come to lunch, Ned. I won't apologize for the table—Mrs. Rolleston superintends that. (*Crosses to* L. I E.)

NED. Then I'll wager the department is all O. K.

[*Both exeunt* R. I E.

(*Sleigh bells heard in the distance gradually drawing nearer.*)

JOSIAH (*outside*). Whoa! darn ye, whoa! (*Enters* D. *in* F. L.) Ruth! Ruth Melindy Suffrony! where be ye? Guess they must be in to dinner. (*Horse makes a noise outside.*) Hi! Hi! there. That nigh hoss gits penickitty every time he comes to town. Sight of brick houses gives him the heaves. No one around? I guess I'll make myself to hum. Halloa! there's the pianny. (*Ad libitum piano bus. At close takes out pipe.*) Frank don't like smokin' in his parlor—I hain't so partickler. I've been a conjecterin' ever sence I was elected jestice of the peace by an overwhelmin' majority of two, how it was that Elijah Thompson couldn't manage the votes down these parts. (*Smokes.*)

RUTH (*enters* R. U. E. *crying*). Oh, daddy, dear old dad. (*Goes to him.*)

JOSIAH. Why, Ruthie—what's busted? Spit it out, and tell your old daddy all about it.

RUTH. Daddy! Frank don't love me any more.

JOSIAH. Yes he do—you be a foolin'.

RUTH. No, daddy, I wish I was. He said I be coarse and ignorant.

JOSIAH. Then he be a darn scoundrel.

RUTH. No, he ain't.

JOSIAH. Yes, he be. You ain't no more coarser nor more ignoranter than what I are.

RUTH. Daddy, why didn't you send me to school?

JOSIAH. Well, yer ma needed ye to hum. But I sent ye all I could. I sent ye two whole weeks to once, one time.

RUTH. So you did—dear, old dad! (*Rises.*) But I want to know more and I will.

JOSIAH. Why, leetle gal, what's come over ye?

RUTH. Nothing much, dad; you'll know some day. Would it cost very much to send me to school?

JOSIAH. No, not a powerful sight. I could drive you over every day in the old bob sled—and there's that leetle fortune your grandma left ye—interest and all, it must amount to as much as fourteen dollars and sixty-eight cents, and you can have it—every darn cent of it.

RUTH. Thank you, dear old dad.

JOSIAH. I've got to be a trottin' along now, Ruth.

RUTH. Why, dad, you've only just come. Can't you stop to dinner? We're going to have blank mange and Charlie Russie.

JOSIAH. I guess my stomach would be s'prised to see them coming down. I wouldn't mind taking a hunk of gingerbread and bowl of tea, but I've got to be going.

RUTH. Dad, what did you bring in?

JOSIAH. Hay. I put two barrels apples on top the load. Can't sell them; guess I'll feed them to the hogs. (*She helps him on with his coat.*) I've got my new mittens with me, your ma made 'em long so I wouldn't git chilblains in my elbows.

RUTH. How is ma?

JOSIAH. She's so she can talk.

RUTH. And Jack?

JOSIAH. Oh, Jack—he's got to be a regular dude. As soon as he heern tell I got elected jestice of the peace, he went right down to the company's store and got himself a bran' new suit of store clothes. He wears a tall hat when he goes to milk the cows. T'other night he was milking old brindle, and when she saw that hat, she kicked him clean over into the back

pasture. She thought he was a strange calf. Now, Ruthie, don't you mind these little flareups. They're like a tin can tied to a dog's tail; they're bound to a cur. When your ma and me was fust married, we used to fight like cats and dogs, but now we git long slicker than a cup of custard. But if the worst comes to the worst, and Frank mistreats ye, jest put your parlor lamp right on that table, so that it will shine through your kitchen window, and your old dad will be over to see how the little kitten jumps. (*Kisses her.*) Now good-bye, Ruthie.

RUTH. Good-bye, dad. Don't forget to kiss ma for me.

JOSIAH. I will if she'll keep her mouth still long enough. [*Exit* D. *in* F. L.

(*Noise of sleigh bells dying away in the distance.* RUTH *is at door bidding him good-bye as* FRANK *and* NED *enter* L. 1 E.)

FRANK (*crosses to* R. 1 E.). I thought my wife knew enough to present herself at the table when her husband had company. (*To* NED.) Come into the next room, Ned. I have some excellent cigars.

NED. I want to have a little talk with your wife first; I'll join you presently. (FRANK *exit* R. 1 E.). Say, Ruth, you are fixed up real nicely here, aren't you? (*Sits* L.)

RUTH (*on sofa*). Oh, yes, we be quite comfortable.

NED. I suppose you are happy, now that you are settled down.

RUTH. I suppose so. Say, Mr. Clearfield, is your lady friend, Miss Parkman, awful handsome?

NED. No —— I don't call her exactly handsome, but she is very smart.

RUTH. How did she get smart?

NED. By going to school.

RUTH. I wish I could go to school.

NED. You can't—you are married. Say, Ruth, do you remember Prof. Ticklepitcher?

RUTH. The funny bugular alarm man?

NED. Yes, I met him to-day. He's away up in the world now. Owns a college of his own. He gave me his card; here it is. (*Reads.*) Prof. Philander Ticklepitcher, A. M.

RUTH. What does A. M. mean?

NED. Call in the morning.

RUTH. Can I keep this card?

NED. Certainly.

FRANK (*outside*). Are you coming, Ned?

NED. By jove! I forgot. (*Rises.*) Excuse me, Ruth, I have an appointment with a good cigar. [*Exit* R. 1 E.

RUTH. So Miss Parkman be a wonderful girl. Why can't I be a wonderful girl? It ain't my fault that I be ignorant, it is my misfortune; but I would rather be the simple innocent country girl that I am than be like some of those brazen-faced women who call themselves leaders of society. Society! Society! Oh, what a mockery. (*Looks at card.*) Prof. Tickle-pitcher, Unionville Seminary. I remember him. He once told me if I ever needed a friend to come to him. I need that friend now. I will go to him, and under an assumed name begin life all over again. If I succeed in learning the A B C's of life, I will succeed in winning the X Y Z's of my husband's love. The little home which has been to me a paradise, must be for a time lost—but when I return, eddicated and refined, paradise will be regained. (*Exit* R. U. E.; *reënters with lamp; puts lamp on table; puts on wrap, kisses* FRANK'S *hat; goes to door in flat left.*) Good-bye, dear home, good-bye.

FRANK (*enters* R. 1 E.). What is the matter, Ruth?

RUTH. The matter, Frank?

FRANK. Yes, you have been crying.

RUTH. Have I, Frank?

FRANK. You are far too sensitive to-night, and don't seem to remember anything. It is very annoying to be compelled to jog your memory forever. (*On sofa.*)

RUTH. You won't have to jog it any more, Frank.

FRANK. That's sensible.

RUTH. May I kiss you, husband?

FRANK. Why, of course. (*She kisses him.*) What a strange request?

RUTH. Good-bye, dear husband, I'm going out.

FRANK. Going over to your father's?

RUTH. No.

FRANK. Then may I ask what takes Mrs. Rolleston from her husband's roof at such an hour?

RUTH. I thought I might be in the way here.

FRANK. Let me be the better judge of that.

RUTH. So you be, Frank—so you be. But your house is no place for an ignorant country girl like me—let me tell you before my heart breaks. I be coarse and ignorant, I ain't got

any of those refined ways you want in a wife; I be but a doll to be dressed up in your house.

FRANK. Ruth?

RUTH. Your Ruth won't trouble you any longer; but Frank—some time—some time you will think kindly of your poor little country sweetheart.

FRANK. Ruth—my wife!

RUTH. It is too late now. (*Starts for door.*)

FRANK. Where are you going, Ruth?

RUTH. I am going out into the world, and when I return, I shall be a lady.

(*She exit* D. *in* F. L.; *he looks at door for a moment, takes his pipe from mantel, goes to light it, lets pipe fall from his hands, takes out handkerchief and buries his face in his hands as curtain falls.*)

ACT IV.

SCENE.—*The* PARKMAN *homestead in Philadelphia. Five years are supposed to have elapsed between Acts III. and IV. Palace arch in* 3, *backed by fancy.* C. D., *backed by conservatory. Sofa* L. *Table; two chairs* R.)

FLANNIGAN (*discovered at rise, dusting furniture*). Well, now, this do be a fine job. All I have to do is wear a swalley tail coat and do the agreeable among the big bugs. There's a big reception to-night. I've had five drinks of reception wine already, and they're still a comin'. (*Bell outside.*) There's the bell. (*Exit* C. D., *singing.*) "The bell goes a ringin' for Sarah, Sarah."

Enter NED *and* NELLIE, C. D., *from* L.

NED. Well, Nellie, this is the third time we've been engaged. I suppose the third time is final.

NELLIE. It is all your fault that our previous engagements were broken off.

NED. We'll have to be married soon, or this one will be disrupted also.

RUTH (*outside* L. C.) Nellie! Oh, Nellie!

NELLIE. That is Lucille. (*Goes to* C. D.) Excuse me, please. Here I am, Lucille.

RUTH (*enters* C. D. L., *as* LUCILLE ASKMAN). Aw—I beg pawdon, don't cher know. (*Sees* NED.) You need not present me—this is Mr. Clearfield. (*Bus.*) Chawmed—awfully chawmed.

NELLIE. Why how did you recognize him?

RUTH. Why, my deah, didn't you have his pictures hung up all over the wall at school, and did you not keep me awake nights extolling his virtues?

NELLIE. Now don't you believe a word of it. (*To* NED.)

NED. Oh, I don't know.

NELLIE (*crosses to* NED). Will you have the kindness to tell me what you are staring at?

NED. At the striking resemblance between Miss Askman and Mrs. Frank Rolleston. Ruth!

RUTH (*turns quickly*). Aha! (*Recovers her affected style.*) I beg your pawdon.

NED. There's a mystery here; I'd like to solve it. (*Goes up to* C. D.) Ladies, kindly excuse me. [*Exit.*

NELLIE. Well, Lucille, what is your opinion?

RUTH. I think he is perfectly chawming, and I can only hope that you may be very happy.

NELLIE. Nothing certain about it. We've been engaged so many times, but it has never gone so far as this.. (*Holds up a ring.*)

RUTH. An engagement ring? He certainly is in earnest this time.

FLANNIGAN (*enters* C. D.). Mr. Frank Rolleston.

[*Exit* C. D.

NELLIE (*to* RUTH, *who utters an exclamation*). Why, Lucille, what is the matter?

RUTH. Nothing. I accidentally pricked my fingers with one of these thorns.

NELLIE. Dear cousin Frank—I want him to meet you. He is lovely and you will be sure to like him. Excuse me, Lucille. [*Exit* C. D.

RUTH. Like him! My husband! May God grant, that all wives love their husbands with the pure and holy devotion, that I do mine. Five years absence! Five years banished from Paradise! Five years of self-inflicted torture! Oh, to throw myself into his arms—cast aside the veneer of fashion, and say to him, "Frank, it is I, your own Ruth. Don't you know me?"

FLANNIGAN (*enters* C. D.). Professor Kick the Pitcher.

RUTH. My tutor. Admit him.

PROF. (*enters* C. D.). I am already admitted. (*To* FLANNIGAN.) Begone. (FLANNIGAN *exit* C. D.) Ah, good-evening, Miss Askman.

RUTH. Good-evening, professor, I hope you are well.

PROF. Well! I am more than well. I am exuberant. I need not enquire regarding your health. Is the mind as well as the body?

RUTH. Professor, you know the ordeal I am about to undergo. I need all my fortitude.

PROF. I have been your adviser for five years. I have faith in the ultimate success of your plan. (*He sits* R. *of table.*)

NED *and* FRANK *enter* C. D.

NED. How are the nerves, Frank, pretty strong?

FRANK. Never better. Why do you ask?

NED. You are liable to an attack from the ladies.

FRANK. Never fear, Ned. (*Crosses to* L.) My days of love and romance are now over.

NED. How does this fair vision strike you? (*Points to* RUTH.)

FRANK. I see a very pretty face. (RUTH *turns her head a little and laughs.*) Am I dreaming? That is Ruth. (*Bus.*)

NED. Not so fast. (*Bus.*) I thought so until I had discovered my mistake. That is Miss Lucille Askman, one of our high toned society ladies.

FRANK. But see—that face. (RUTH *laughs.*) That laugh! It is Ruth.

NED. A striking resemblance. We meet with such every day.

FRANK. But none like that, Ned, none like that. (*Goes up* C.)

NELLIE (*enters* C. D.). Welcome home, dear cousin. (*She kisses him;* FLANNIGAN *enters* C. D. *and quickly exit* C. D.) Why, Frank, how you have aged during the past five years. You have been worrying over some secret sorrow.

FRANK. Sorrow? Yes, a sorrow of which the world has never known.

NELLIE. Frank, I want to present you to one of my school fellows. Lucille! Lucille! Lucille!

PROF. Lucille, you have a loose heel.

NELLIE. Lucille!

RUTH (*turning*). I beg your pardon, did you call me, Nellie?

NELLIE. Yes. I wish to present to you my Cousin Frank, and I want you to be the best of friends.

RUTH. Chawmed to meet you, sir. (*Bows.*) I have heard Nellie speak of you very frequently at college, and I trust that we may be the best of friends. (*Turns.*) Do you know, professor, that was a most amusing story you were telling.

PROF. (*laughs and chokes*). Amusing in the extreme.

FRANK. It is my wife's face, risen from the dead to haunt me with its memory.

NED. Come on, Frank, I will present you to some of the other guests. [*Exit* L. 1 E.

FRANK. Ladies, kindly excuse my absence.

RUTH. Only for a time. Your praises have been sung so much by your charming cousin, that I am prepared to lionize you after we become better acquainted. We may discover that we have many friends with whom we have been mutually associated.

FRANK. I sincerely trust we may. [*Exit* L. 1 E.

RUTH (*crosses to* L.). My husband! my husband! How altered! how changed! [*Exit* C. D. R.

PROF. But he is just the same.

RACHEL (*enters* C. D.). Nellie, your mother wishes to speak with you in the library. (*Sits on sofa* L.)

NELLIE. Very well. [*Exit* C. D.

PROF. (*drinks wine and eats bananas; business*). Excuse me, but your face is familiar to me. Have you had it long?

RACHEL. Sir?

PROF. I beg your pardon. Doubtless you remember me.

RACHEL. Oh yes, you are the gentleman ——

PROF. Who walked home in a barrel? (*Both laugh.*) Now, if I remember distinctly, your name is Miss Waterman.

RACHEL. Excuse me, I am Mrs. W. Courtney now.

PROF. What! Married! (*Nearly collapses.*)

RACHEL. Yes.

PROF. I congratulate you.

RACHEL. I am a widow now.

PROF. Glad to hear it. (*Business.*)

RACHEL. Sir!

PROF. Glad to hear it for many reasons. Chiefly because it makes you more of an adept in the art of breaking other hearts.

RACHEL. I do not understand.

PROF. Ah! don't you? I will elucidate. Do you remember the camping out scene in the Green Mountains of six years ago?

RACHEL. I do.

PROF. And doubtless you remember the strange infatuation I had for a certain party, that was twisted off in the twinkling of an eye?

RACHEL. Oh yes, I remember. You were not then in a position to speak of—of ——

PROF. Matrimony? Well, hardly. (*Aside.*) I was in pawn for a ninety-seven cent wash bill. (*Aloud.*) Is my conversation distasteful to you?

RACHEL. Oh no, not at all.

L. of C.

PROF. There is an armchair in the conservatory yonder which is admirably adapted to the propagation of youthful and tender sentiment. Shall we hie ourselves thither?

RACHEL. As you please. (*Crossing to* R. C.) Your conversation is so very amusing.

PROF. And interesting?

RACHEL. Perhaps. [*Exit* R. U. E.

PROF. Charming lady. Charming. Wait for me, sweet one. You can't lose me, Charlie. [*Exit quickly* R. U. E.

JOSIAH (*enters* C. D. *from* L.). I guess this must be the place. That starched up feller with a biled shirt on asked me for my keerd. I told him I had a whole pack of keerds to home. My stars, this is a pooty tall place. (*Business.*) Whiskers on the carpet. It would be a darn funny thing if I'd got in the wrong cathedral. I reckon I ought to put a bell on so I won't get lost, strayed, or stolen. Ruth is comin' back from school to-day, and she's puttin' on more style than a Bantam rooster on a Shanghai coop. (*Bus. of looking at wine.*) Drinkables, eh! Well, seein' it's you, I'll jine you. (*Drinks.*) That tastes like juniper berry tea. (*Sees bananas.*) Well, now, there's two of the all firedest biggest string beans I ever see. I'll jest about take them home for seed. (*Rises and turns to* C.) I wonder where be they all.

FLANNIGAN (*enters* C. D. *with tray and ginger pop*). Well, how are ye, Mr. Hedges? (*Puts tray on table.*)

JOSIAH. Flannigan, as I'm a sinner! Well, I'll be horn swoggled! (*Shakes hands.*) Come over here and set down till I talk to ye. (*Sit on sofa* L.) Last time I saw you, you was a chasin' a drove of Berkshire hogs down on Zeke Stubbs' place. What are ye doin' of now?

FLANNIGAN. I'm workin' here. I'm the butler.

JOSIAH. The which?

FLANNIGAN. The butler.

JOSIAH. Jest so. Have you got a match on ye?

FLANNIGAN. I have. (*Bus.*) How is the wife? Is she smart?

JOSIAH. She's too darn smart. (*Whispers.*)

FLANNIGAN. No! When did it happen?

JOSIAH. Day before yistiddy. Weighs eight pounds. (*Both light pipes.*) Say, do you remember the time the old mare run away with ye? (*Laughs.*)

FLANNIGAN. Begorra, I do; and she threw me over into the bog with head down and heels up like a lamp-post. I

have a fine job here; all I have to do is to wait on the door bell and drink wine.

JOSIAH. What's that darn stuff in that bottle?

FLANNIGAN. Why, that's imported Catawba.

JOSIAH. I thought it was slobber gobber. I'm in town on a bat. I'm a celebratin'. I've got every man full for three miles around. Such doin's as we've had to home don't happen every day.

FLANNIGAN. Wait till I crack this bottle. (*Goes to table.*)

JOSIAH. Don't crack it, pull the cork out. My stars, if Ruth should come in and find me a drinkin', she'd think her old daddy was a gittin' sporty. Now it strikes me, Flannigan—— (*Cork flies out, strikes* JOSIAH. *Ad lib. scene; at end* FLANNIGAN *exits* C. D. *with bottle.*) Well, I'll be horn swoggled. That bottle kicks worse than a Vermont mule. Lucky I didn't drink it, or I'd be goin' up and down like a jumpin' Jack. (*Looks* L. 3 E.) Halloa! there's the art gallery. Ma was jest dyin' to see an art gallery; so when we went to Bosting I took her to see one. We went into one of them rooms where there was a statoot. As soon as ma seen it, she kivered her face with her fan. She thought it was a real live gal, and she'd forgot to put her frock on. [*Exit* L. 3 E.

RUTH (*enters* C. D.). I escaped from the crowd for a moment. I want quiet time to reflect. I want to be alone, alone with my tortured heart.

FRANK (*outside*). Very well, Ned, I will join you.

RUTH. His voice. What shall I do? I'll sit here (*in chair* L. *of table* R.), and pretend to be asleep.

FRANK (*enters* C. D.). Not here! (*Sees her.*) There she is, and asleep. Ruth, my wife! I thought I had found you.

RUTH (*awakens*). Gracious! Have I been sleeping?

FRANK. Pardon me, I—I didn't mean to disturb you.

RUTH. I am glad you did disturb me, for I was having a horrible dream.

FRANK. A dream!

RUTH. Yes, shall I relate it?

FRANK. If you will. (*She motions him to a seat.*)

RUTH. I dreamed I was living in a country home, way back among the hills. A home where a parent's commands emanated from the lips of love. A stranger came to our home one day. He was handsome, chivalrous, and true; just the one to win an unsophisticated heart. We were married against

the wishes of his parents and mine. Our little home was a paradise. Then came a change. Gradually it dawned upon me that I was ignorant, he refined. He loved music, I endured it. He loved the bright and the poetic, I was oblivious of all, save to the fact that the tendrils of my heart were intertwined in his. At last the film of love was pierced, and I saw myself as I was. I was the ball and chain around my husband's heels. I was the impediment that stood between him and social distinction. One night,—I shall never forget it,—I went out into the cold and darkness. The cold wind from the north, was nothing compared to the chill that was here in my heart. After years of absence I returned to my husband, but he had forgotten me. I went to him, put my hand upon his shoulder (*she does so*), even as I put my hand on yours, looked him in the face, but his lips were silent, his heart was marble. I turned from him (*she does so*) to go back to my youthful surroundings when—when—I awakened from my dream. (*She is* R.)

FRANK (*rises*). Miss Askman, that experience was mine. Five years ago the lamp of my happiness flickered and died away when the wife of my bosom left my home. She was as pure as an angel, and I loved her as a Christian loves his God. My love for her has increased as the years have rolled on. Her image is ever with me. See (*bus.*), in this locket I carry her dear face.

RUTH. If she returned to you in her purity and innocence, what would you do?

FRANK. Do! I would throw myself at her feet, and beg forgiveness for every harsh word, every cruel look that wounded her pure and sensitive nature. (*She drops handkerchief; he picks it up. As he restores it to her he sees her wedding ring.*) That ring! It is mine.

RUTH. I beg your pardon. It is mine, given me by my husband.

FRANK. I care not. There is something in your face that draws me toward you. It is the resemblance to the woman whose memory I revere. The dream you have just related is the history of my life. Mine was the pride, mine has been the punishment. Five years ago that punishment began, and during those years the civilized world has been searched in a vain endeavor to bring her back. Lady, I see your face, I hear your voice. It is her face, her voice. (RUTH *laughs.*) My God! it is Ruth, my wife.

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(*She dodges under his arm as he goes* R. *She gets in a chair* L.)

RUTH. Keep away, Frank, you be a foolin' me again.

FRANK. No, Ruth.

RUTH. And you won't git tired of correctin' me continerousslessly?

FRANK. No, Ruth.

RUTH. And you'll let me say "Picter"?

FRANK. If you wish.

RUTH. And you'll hold me close, close to your heart?

FRANK. Close to my heart and forever.

RUTH. Then come, Frank, come. (*Embrace.*)

NED *and* NELLIE *enter from* L. I E. PROF. *and* RACHEL *enter from* R. I E. JOSIAH C. D. PROF. *and* NED *turn their ladies, face to wing.*

PROF. *and* NED. Look at the birdies! Look at the birds!

CURTAIN.

NED AND NELLIE. L. PROF. AND RACHEL. R.

RUTH AND FRANK. C.

JOSIAH (*at back*).

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